

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

E-mail messages or computer files are scanned to identify embedded internet addresses 18. These embedded internet addresses 18 refer to data that may be
5 retrieved via the internet 4. This data is pre-emptively retrieved and scanned for
malware even though it has not been requested by a user. If the data is found to be
malware-free, then a record of this is kept. If a user subsequently seeks to access the
data associated with that embedded internet address, then the stored data may be
referred to and if the internet address is found and the data associated with that
10 address is unchanged since it was previously scanned, then that data may be supplied
to the user without the need to be rescanned.

[Figure 4]